

CLAIMS

1. Method of deacidifying drinks, especially fermented ones, containing acid compounds and in particular acetic acid, characterised in that it comprises carrying out the following operations:

- 5 - subjecting the drink to be treated to nanofiltration or reverse osmosis to obtain a retained substance (R1) and a permeated substance (P1), the latter still containing part of the acetic acid from the initial drink;
- neutralising the acidity of the permeated substance (P1) by controlled addition of at least one basic compound which reacts with the acid compounds in the permeated substance (P1) to form
10 corresponding salts;
- subjecting the permeated substance (P1) to nanofiltration or reverse osmosis to obtain a retained substance (R2) and a permeated substance (P2), the latter being substantially free from the reaction salts present in (P1);
- mixing the retained substance (R1) and the permeated substance (P2) to form the final
15 deacidified drink.

2. Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the controlled addition of basic compound to the permeated substance (P1) is carried out by adding a predetermined quantity of such a compound, previously calculated according to the quantity of liquid to be treated and the reduction in
20 volatile acidity to be obtained.

3. Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the controlled addition of basic compound to the permeated substance (P1) is carried out by monitoring the change in the pH of said permeated substance in real time as an increasing quantity of said basic compound is blended in.
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4. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterised in that it is carried out discontinuously, with the initial drink and the permeated substance (P1) with neutralised acidity being treated by the same nanofiltration or reverse osmosis installation, in two separate operating phases.

30 5. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterised in that it comprises a continuous treatment method where the treatment operations are carried out in series, the initial drink and the permeated substance (P1) with neutralised acidity being treated by two different nanofiltration or reverse osmosis installations, arranged in series in a treatment line or loop.

6. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 5, characterised in that, particularly in the case of treatment of drinks obtained from grapes or containing grape juice, the basic compound is preferably potassium hydroxide and the membrane or membranes used for nanofiltration or reverse osmosis have a high rejection rate, preferably above about 95%, relative to the potassium and potassium salts.

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7. Method according to claim 6, characterised in that the membrane or membranes used for nanofiltration or reverse osmosis also have a high rejection rate, preferably above about 95%, relative to malic and tartaric acid.